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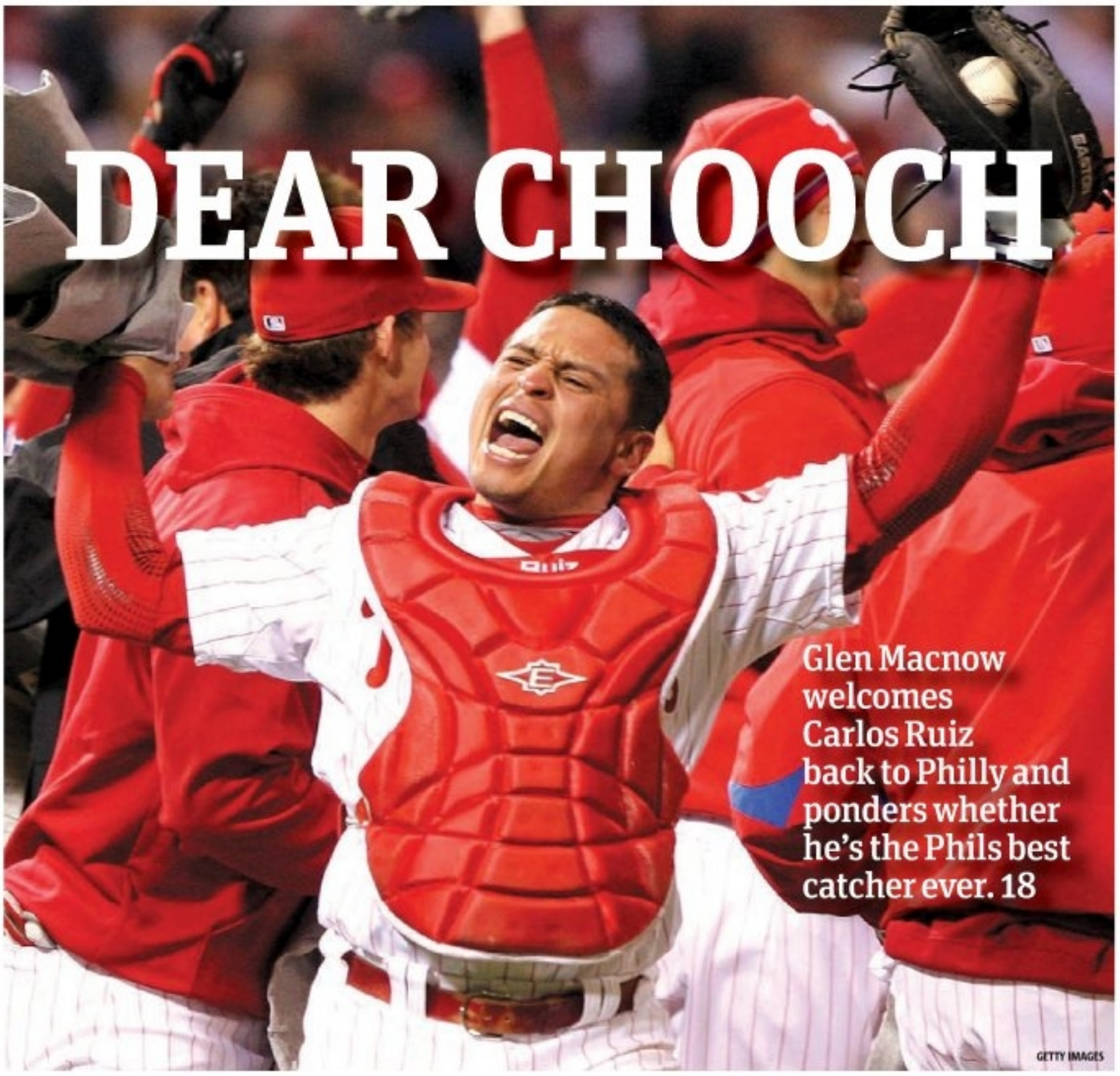
Tuesday, May 9, 2017 metro.us | t: MetroPhilly | f: MetroPhilly

CHRISSY METZ SHUTS IT DOWN

The 'This Is Us' star takes on her body shamers. 12

You need more erotica in your life. 16

How to deal with seasonal allergies. 17



DEAR CHOOCH

Glen Macnow welcomes Carlos Ruiz back to Philly and ponders whether he's the Phils best catcher ever. 18

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YATES WARNED TRUMP ON FLYNN BLACKMAIL FEARS

1 A former senior U.S. law enforcement figure said she warned President Donald Trump's White House in January about then-national security adviser Michael Flynn because she feared he could have been open to blackmail by Russia. Sally Yates, who was briefly the acting U.S. attorney general earlier this year, told White House counsel Don McGahn on Jan. 26 that Flynn had not been telling the truth about his contacts with Russia's ambassador to Washington. Yates, originally appointed by former President Barack Obama's administration, said she feared Moscow could try to blackmail Flynn because it also knew he was not being truthful about conversations with Ambassador Sergei Kislyak about U.S. sanctions on Moscow. REUTERS

BANKS TO MOVE 9K JOBS FROM UK DUE TO BREXIT

2 The largest banks in London plan to move about 9,000 jobs in the next two years, public statements and information shows, as the exodus of finance jobs starts to take shape. Last week Standard Chartered and JPMorgan were the latest global banks to outline plans for their European operations after Brexit. They are among a growing number of lenders pushing ahead with plans to move operations from London. Goldman Sachs chief executive Lloyd Blankfein said in an interview that London's growth as a financial center could "stall" as a result of the upheaval caused by Brexit. Thirteen major banks including Goldman Sachs, UBS, and Citigroup have given an indication of how they would bulk up their operations in Europe to secure market access to the European Union's single market when Britain leaves the bloc. REUTERS

SOUTH KOREANS VOTE FOR NEW LEADER

3 South Koreans go to the polls on Tuesday to elect a new leader, looking to move on from a corruption scandal that brought down former President Park Geun-hye and shook the political and business elite to the core. Unless there is a major upset, liberal Moon Jae-in — who calls for a moderate approach on North Korea, wants to reform powerful family-run conglomerates and boost fiscal spending to create jobs — will be elected president. The vote will end months of leadership vacuum. Park was ousted on charges of bribery and abuse of power in March to become South Korea's first democratically elected president to be forced from office. She is in jail, on trial. REUTERS

BANKSY BREXIT

4 A recently painted mural by British graffiti artist Banksy, depicting a workman chipping away at one of the stars on a European Union (EU) themed flag, is pictured in Dover, south east England, on Monday. GETTY IMAGES

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

FCC WEBSITE HIT BY ATTACKS PROPOSAL

5 The U.S. Federal Communications Commission said Monday that its website was hit by deliberate denial of service attacks after the telecommunications regulator was criticized by comedian John Oliver for its plan to reverse "net neutrality" rules. The attacks came soon after Oliver on Sunday urged viewers to file electronic comments with the FCC opposing the plan unveiled by FCC Chairman Ajit Pai to reverse rules implemented under President Barack Obama that boosted government regulatory powers over internet service providers. Pai's plan faces an initial vote on May 18. Oliver in his HBO show "Last Week Tonight," owned by Time Warner Inc., urged viewers to use a website purchased by the show that takes visitors directly to an FCC page to file comments. REUTERS

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KIMBERLY M. AQUILINA, WEB REPORTER

"The President is Missing" was trending on Twitter, but it wasn't a "snowflake's" dream-come-true, as one tweeter suggested. Former President Bill Clinton is co-authoring a new book with the king of thrillers, James Patterson, drawing on his experiences as commander in chief. Find out more at **metro.us/news/politics.**

PLAY TO WIN

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Every Monday, we pick a random winner from the participants who answered correctly one of the quizzes from the previous week.

metro.us/quiz

Adult vaccines: New S. Philly primary care practice weighs in

WRITTEN BY
Amy Smith

A new Jefferson Health primary care practice in South Philadelphia is getting the word out about the importance of adult vaccines. The vaccine debate is alive and well in parenting circles, but where does that leave adults? According to health experts, standard vaccinations are generally a good idea—regardless of age.

"It's pretty common that parents bring their children for regular checkups and shots, but forget to see if they are due for anything themselves," says Jefferson Health primary care physician Marie Z. Kairys, M.D. She and Kathryn McGrath, M.D., lead the team at Jefferson Health's newest primary care office location at 2422-24 South Broad Street (second floor).

Drs. Kairys and McGrath offer expert care to patients of all ages, from pediatrics to geriatrics, and are currently accepting new patients. When it comes to adult vaccines, the first step is uncovering which ones you've already had.

"We try to hunt down old records from previous providers. We also scour the city's shot registry, as well as old school records and pharmacy records that might be available," says Dr. Kairys. "We can also check for immunity to some vaccine-preventable diseases with a blood test. For instance, we can check for immunity to chickenpox, measles, mumps and Hepatitis A and B this way to see if a person is already immune and doesn't need vaccination or a booster shot."

She adds that many commonly needed vaccines can actually be given at the same time. For example, most patients can safely receive a flu shot, tetanus with whooping cough shot (Tdap) and pneumonia shot all during one visit. And in many cases, combo shots translate to fewer injections.

"For children or adults who have never had any shots before, or only have a few documented, there is a 'catch up' schedule," she says. "That said, some vaccine-preventable diseases may actually require fewer doses in the primary series as a person becomes older."

So what vaccines do adults actually need? That answer varies from person to person; some medical problems and/or treatments may rule out (or, in some cases, necessitate) specific vaccines.

"Even though someone might be due for a vaccine, there are some medical problems and treatments that might be contraindications to getting a certain shot or to getting it right now," says Dr. Kairys. "There are also some conditions that would mean a person should get shots earlier than other patients or should get specific shots that others don't need. When this is the case, we work directly with specialists to coordinate individual vaccination plans for our patients."

Here's a snapshot of some common vaccines for adults.

HPV (human papillomavirus)

According to the CDC, roughly one in four people in the U.S. are currently infected. Since many people never develop any symptoms, getting vaccinated is important.

Influenza (flu)

Flu season changes from year to year, but the good news is that we have the flu shot in our arsenal. Experts say it's the easiest and most effective way to prevent catching and/or spreading the flu.

Pneumonia

The U.S. offers two different types of pneumonia vaccines—the one that's right for you is determined by your age and medical history. Generally speaking, the CDC recommends a pneumonia vaccine for all adults 65 and older.

Looking for an experienced and compassionate primary care physician?

Drs. Kairys and McGrath are accepting new patients and have convenient office hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesdays.
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Soda tax opponents carted boxes filled with what they claimed were 18,000 petitions against the soda tax into City Hall on Monday. AX THE BEV TAX COALITION

Soda tax opponents bring 18K petitions to Kenney's office

Soda industry and restaurant-linked opponents of Philly's soda tax are still fighting.

HAYDEN MITMAN
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letters@metro.us

The soda tax fight ain't over yet.

A day in advance of a City Council hearing on the city's 2018 budget, opponents of the city's tax on sweetened drinks descended on City Hall carting boxes of paperwork calling for the tax's end.

"This is people showing our opinions of how bad this tax is," said Nick DiCarlo, a sales manager for Canada Dry.

Members of the Ax the Bev Tax Coalition delivered reams of paperwork — which they claimed included "more than 18,000 letters and petitions" — to City Hall, saying they gathered these documents by getting signatures from local store owners and from grocery shoppers.

The tax's opponents argued that the tax has hurt sales at area grocery stores and claimed area bottlers have cut more than 150 jobs due to the tax.

The tax, a 1.5 cent-per-ounce tax on sweetened beverages, went into effect at the beginning of 2017. According to numbers presented in a recent article on Billy Penn, the city has collected about $19.1 million in the first three months of the tax.

Asked about this petition, Mayor Jim Kenney's spokeswoman Lauren Hitt said the soda tax has created new jobs, and the funding has been used to benefit children throughout the city, with free pre-K programs, community school efforts and new jobs for educators.

"While it's impossible to verify the authenticity of these signatures, we do know that thousands of Philadelphians are already benefitting from this tax," she wrote in an email. "There are nearly 2,000 children in free, quality pre-K; over 250 new jobs in early education; and 4,500 public school students in community schools."

Hitt also cited an ongoing court case as a reason the numbers aren't higher. The American Beverage Association, the Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association and other plaintiffs are suing to have the tax ruled illegal, claiming that it is a duplicate of the state's sales tax.

The lawsuit was dismissed in a Philadelphia court last year, but an appeal is pending in the Commonwealth Court.

"These numbers would be even greater if the soda industry wasn't continuing to pursue a lawsuit against the city even after the Court of Common Pleas dismissed their charges in entirety," Hitt wrote.

Yet, when asked about the impact that this new tax may have made, tax opponents said that the benefits of the tax do not outweigh the loss of jobs or its impact on stores.

"It doesn't make any difference to me where it goes," DiCarlo said of the revenue. "This whole thing has been a loss."

Asked what impact he hopes the petitions will have on the City Council, Ax the Bev Tax Coalition spokesman Anthony Campisi said he hopes legislators take them to heart when discussing the budget on Tuesday.

"We want to show them these today," said Campisi, "then, tomorrow, with business owners, we can tell them about the real, negative impact."

"This is people showing our opinions of how bad this tax is."
Nick DiCarlo

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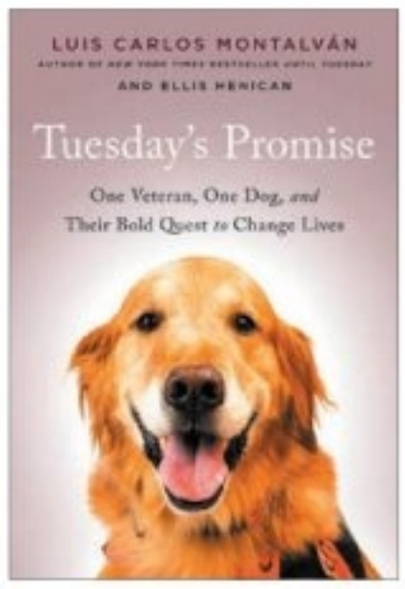
Vet's dog was only solace after war

The service dog in "Tuesday's Promise" gets a hug. PROVIDED



A new book details the powerful relationship between a U.S. veteran returned from Iraq and his dog.

ELLIS HENICAN
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Metro columnist and political commentator Ellis Henican's new book, "Tuesday's Promise: One Veteran, One Dog, and Their Bold Quest to Change Lives" tells the story of an Iraq War veteran, Capt. Luis Carlos Montalván, who coped with PTSD through the aid of a golden retriever named Tuesday. For eight years, the pair traveled the country advocating for veterans and others with disabilities. Continuing to struggle with demons, in 2016, Montalván took his own life. But Tuesday continues to work as a therapy dog. Read below to learn more about Montalván and Tuesday's story.

"The toughest wounds of war," Luis Carlos Montalván liked to remind me, "are the ones that no one else can see."

Luis was a friend. We spent much of last year together writing a book. A captain in the U.S. Army who earned two Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart, he knew plenty about the human costs of war. When he returned home, he had a terrible time adjusting. This combat veteran was so paralyzed with fear and anxiety, he could barely leave his small Brooklyn apartment.

Then Luis met Tuesday, a golden retriever with a thick, blond coat and a cheerful disposition — and things brightened considerably. Not only could Tuesday respond to 200 verbal commands, he knew instinctively when Luis was about to have a meltdown. With warm breath and a wet nose, Tuesday would quickly nuzzle his friend.

What a team these two made, heading off on an eight-year journey of healing. Advocating for veterans and others with disabilities. Agitating with military commanders and clueless VA bureaucrats. They even teamed up with U.S. Sen. Al Franken to pass a law guaranteeing veterinary care for veterans' service dogs.

"Paws forward," Luis would say, and the two of them would march out on another campaign. A traumatized Marine was being threatened with a dishonorable discharge. A distraught mother had just emailed.

Everywhere they went, Luis and Tuesday highlighted the talents of these well-trained animals. Man and dog, they won fans and became recognized as two of America's most effective advocates for returning vets.

"You understand," Luis confided more than once, "this mission is also my way of healing myself."

He and Tuesday even appeared on the "Late Show with David Letterman," where Dave fell in love with Tuesday. "What do you expect?" Luis said. "Tuesday's a whole lot cuter than I am."

Luis knew they had a message to share with the world, how a dog had pulled a man back from the darkness, how service dogs could be hugely helpful to others in need. I loved the story. I helped him write the book. I am proud of what we did. The new book hits stores today. It is called "Tuesday's Promise: One Veteran, One Dog, and Their Bold Quest to Change Lives." It's a love letter to Tuesday and a clarion call on behalf of America's wounded warriors.

Sadly, Luis isn't here to celebrate with his friend.

On Dec. 2, the invisible wounds of Luis' war slapped tragically back at him. This man who had improved so many lives decided to end his own. He went into a hotel room in Texas and swallowed a handful of pills. No one saw this coming.

Uncharacteristically, he had left Tuesday with friends in New York. I still wonder: Would he have done what he did if Tuesday had been with him?

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Alleged drivers Evaugh-Sha Walters, left, and Shone Santiago, right, are charged with three counts of murder for deaths that occurred during a late-night drag race in West Pottsgrove Township. ALL IMAGES PROVIDED

Second driver charged in pregnant woman, unborn baby's racing crash deaths

Victims Marissa Kelly and Anthony Rodriguez were passengers in a car that crashed while drag racing.

SAM NEWHOUSE
@scnewhouse
sam.newhouse@metro.us

Montgomery County prosecutors announced Monday that they have arrested and charged the second driver involved in a fatal crash on Route 422 in February.

Evaughn-Sha Walters, 21, of Washington, D.C., was arraigned on Sunday. He is charged with the deaths of Marissa "Mickie" Kelly, 20, of Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, who was 15 weeks pregnant, her unborn child and Anthony Rodriguez, 23, of Elmhurst, New York.

Marissa "Mickie" Kelly, 20, died after a BMW she was seated in crashed while drag racing.

Kelly and Rodriguez were passengers in a 2007 white BMW 328xi being driven by Shone Santiago, 22, of New York City, as he raced with Walters around midnight on Feb. 4 in West Pottsgrove Township, according to prosecutors.

Santiago's vehicle was reportedly traveling at 121 mph when he lost control of the vehicle, and it crashed through the right guardrail and went airborne. It traveled some 157 feet before flipping and landing on its roof. All three occupants were wearing their seatbelts.

Walters was driving a Toyota Camry at the time, and he reportedly called 911 to say he had witnessed the car go off the road after the crash but did not acknowledge that he was racing.

Cellphone video recovered from his phone showed him racing Santiago on Route 100 an hour earlier, and the video shows Walters' speedometer reaching 140 mph, according to prosecutors.

According to court documents, Walters told police in an interview that he and Santiago knew each other from Universal Technical Institute in Exton, Pennsylvania, a vocational school, and he acknowledged that the two had been drag racing that evening before the crash occurred.

They were driving in a 40 mph work zone at the time of the crash.

Santiago was also previously charged with third-degree murder charges for the deaths of both passengers and the unborn child. He is also charged with driving while under the influence of marijuana. Santiago suffered multiple injuries in the crash.

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HIGHER EDUCATION IS DRIVING THE PHILADELPHIA REGION

The Greater Philadelphia region has long been known for its strengths in many sectors, including the manufacturing, life sciences and technology fields. These industries drive growth and prosperity that reach far beyond the 11-county region.

The force behind what drives such a strong economy is the talent being produced by the high concentration of colleges and universities in Greater Philadelphia. There are 103 colleges in the region that play an integral part in producing a thriving economy. According to the Brookings Institute, those who graduate with a bachelor's degree generate $278,000 more into the local economy than high school graduates.

Out of Greater Philadelphia's three million workers, 34.7 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher, a percentage that is higher than those in New York City, Houston or Los Angeles. There are also more professional degrees awarded per resident in Greater Philadelphia than in any other region in the nation.

These Philadelphia-area universities contain more than half a million students, the fourth-largest university population among all U.S. metropolitan areas. These include top-ranked schools, including four of the 20 best universities in the country: Haverford College, Princeton University, Swarthmore University and the University of Pennsylvania.

More than the talent that they are producing is the economic impact that the schools have themselves made on the local and statewide economy. In 2012, Drexel University generated $1.5 billion within Philadelphia and $2.4 billion within the state of Pennsylvania. Schools like the University of Delaware and Rowan University are also driving hundreds of millions of dollars regionally and statewide.

People from around the world are earning 90,000 degrees annually in Greater Philadelphia, from research, engineering, business, entrepreneurial, liberal arts and technology programs that set the standard of excellence in higher education. And after they graduate, they want to remain here; according to Campus Philly, 64 percent of these

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If you want to learn more about education and talent in Greater Philadelphia, contact me at rwonderling@chamberphl.com.

Rob Wonderling is president and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia.

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Judge: Accused NY, NJ bomber to be tried in New York

Lawyers for Rahimi, a U.S. citizen, had proposed Vermont and Washington, D.C. as alternatives.

An Afghan-born man charged with setting off bombs in New York and New Jersey will be tried in New York after a federal judge rejected his lawyers' argument that he could not get a fair trial in the city where he is accused of injuring 30 people.

At a hearing in Manhattan federal court on Monday, U.S. District Judge Richard Berman denied a motion to move the case against Ahmad Rahimi to another federal court, saying an impartial jury could be assembled in "one of the largest and most diverse districts in the country."

Rahimi, 29, is facing federal and state charges in New York and New Jersey after authorities said he detonated bombs in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan and in the coastal New Jersey town of Seaside Heights last September.

The bomb in New York injured 30 people but the explosion in New Jersey hurt no one.

According to prosecutors, Rahimi also left behind unexploded bombs in New York and in Elizabeth, New Jersey, before he was captured in Linden, New Jersey, following a shootout with police in which two officers suffered minor injuries.

In their motion to transfer the case, Rahimi's lawyers argued that media coverage of the case would make it impossible to assemble an impartial jury. But Berman said Monday that robust questioning of potential jurors would be enough to ensure fairness.

Berman also noted that other high-profile cases had been tried in the Manhattan court before, including those of Mohammed Salameh and Ramzi Yousef, convicted of helping plan the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. REUTERS

Rahimi UNION COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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Judges hit Trump lawyer with tough questions over revised travel ban

Federal appeals court judges peppered a U.S. Justice Department lawyer with tough questions about President Donald Trump's temporary ban on travelers from six Muslim-majority nations, with several voicing skepticism that protecting national security was the aim of the policy, not religious bias.

Six Democratic appointees on a court dominated by judges named by Democratic presidents showed concerns about reviving the Republican president's March executive order that prohibited new visas to enter the United States for citizens of Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen for three months.

But three Republican appointees on the Richmond, Virginia-based 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals seemed to lean toward the administration, asking whether the president should be second-guessed when it comes to protecting the country's borders and whether the plaintiffs bringing the suit had been sufficiently harmed by the order during arguments before 13 judges.

Fuad Sharif Suleman shows his U.S. immigrant visa. GETTY IMAGES

Based on the judges' questions, a ruling could hinge on whether the appeals court agrees with a lower court judge that past statements by Trump about the need to prevent Muslims from entering the United States should be taken into account. That would be bad news for a young administration seeking victory on one of its first policy changes.

"This is not a Muslim ban," Acting Solicitor General Jeffrey Wall, arguing for the government, told the judges during the hearing that lasted two hours, twice as long as scheduled.

Judge Robert King, named by Democratic former President Bill Clinton, told Wall that Trump has never retracted previous comments about wanting to impose a ban on Muslims.

"He's never repudiated what he said about the Muslim ban," King said, referring to Trump's campaign promise for a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States." REUTERS

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Meghan Markle got a full invite to Pippa Middleton's wedding

I'm really getting into the whole Prince Harry and Meghan Markle thing.

After weeks of confusion over whether or not the "Suits" actress would attend Pippa Middleton's wedding, The Telegraph and Express are now reporting that Markle will be attending the full wedding as Prince Harry's date. Squee!

First, there were rumors that Markle wouldn't be invited to Pippa's wedding ceremony at all. Later, a source told People that Middleton was imposing a no-ring, no-bring rule for the formal vow exchange. Now, Pippa and her soon to be husband, James Matthews, are making an exception for Markle, who isn't engaged to Harry. Well, not yet.

Prince Harry, 32, and Markle, 35, made their debut as a couple over the weekend. Afterward, they were caught making out. Royals, they're just like us!

And in March, a friend of the couple told Us Weekly that the two would be engaged by the end of the summer. "Meghan feels a move to London is inevitable," says the source. I'll take that with a grain of salt — but I'll take it, because I want these two to be together forever so badly.

Chrissy Metz is not here for your body shaming

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Chrissy Metz, star of "This Is Us," went to the 2017 MTV Movie & TV Awards on Sunday. She wore a dark red, knee-length latex dress with ruffled sleeves. She looked quite chic.

Apparently, somebody somewhere didn't agree, though. Thankfully, Metz has perfect attendance at the Chrissy Teigen education center for clapping back, and has no problem dismissing any tomfoolery or negativity. Naturally, the 36-year-old actress took to Twitter to defend herself. "For the record, I wear what I want, when I want. News flash it's MY body. #thankstho."

This isn't the first time Metz has stood up for herself when it comes to her weight. But also? The fact is that she looked very good and that dress is fire emoji worthy.

So Bravo, Metz. Bravo.

the word

RACHAEL VAUGHAN CLEMMONS
rachael.clemmons@metro.us

Brad Pitt went to rehab, probably

Last week, Brad Pitt low-key admitted to being a hipster, and told the world he was sober. Now Page Six has learned that Pitt didn't do it all alone: The 53-year-old reportedly attended a special VIP facility for professional help.

Sources — could be anyone at this point, but my guess is Cruella De Vil from "101 Dalmatians," just 'cause — tell the site that Pitt attended meetings and therapy sessions at a discreet facility in a private residence. The center, designed for high-profile Hollywood figures, was set up by some wealthy anonymous person who suffered with substance abuse issues and wanted to help others in a similar position.

Well, it's certainly rude if someone from a private facility leaked this information. But it's great that Pitt is making moves to like, improve himself — even if it took Jolie divorcing him for him to get it together. Nevertheless, I am so proud of you, William Bradley Pitt. If you ever need a shoulder to cry on, be a dear and let me know.

David Spade & Naya Rivera are still happening

David Spade is a 52-year-old man most beloved for his role in "Just Shoot Me" — a television series that premiered 20 years ago. Naya Rivera is a 30-year-old who was in "Glee," and tried to start a feud with co-star Lea Michele, except Lea Michele couldn't be bothered. These two adults, who are proudly vying for the title of this year's second-most-unlikely couple, are still happening.

Us Weekly has photos of the two stepping out for a dinner date in West Hollywood over the weekend. Rivera is wearing Marchesa, because of course she is. Spade is trying his best in a blue suit and tie, and it looks fine.

For what it's worth: Rivera and Spade originally met on the set of an upcoming comedy, "Mad Families," a film written and starring Spade himself. Coincidence! Charlie Sheen also has a starring role, so you can guess just how classy this film will be.

That movie, much like this couple, is gonna be a hard pass for me.

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Superheroes who deserve their own films

The summer movie season is here, and with it the usual glut of comic book movies. The genre won't be going away anytime soon, but eventually Hollywood will need more superheroes. Here are 10 that deserve their own stand-alone romp — and not just as part of some jam-packed installment. MATT PRIGGE

Domino
She's going to swing by for the "Deadpool" sequel, but the X-Force member sounds awesome on her own. She's a mutant who can change the probability of events happening. OK, that doesn't sound exciting on its face, but when combined with her mercenary skills — and cool makeup, with a big black circle over her left eye — she's like another Black Widow.

Arm-Fall-Off-Boy
"The Lego Batman Movie" made a decent joke out of unearthing untold obscure, nonsensical yet totally real villains, like Condiment King, who pulverizes his prey with squirts of ketchup and mustard. But heroes can be ridic, too. Take Arm-Fall-Off-Boy, an '80s DC creation who can tear off his arms and then beat people with them. Granted, this might be more suitable for a comedy. (Imagine Dax Sheppard doing it.) But a guy who can beat people with his own limbs does sound pretty badass.

Swamp Thing
Technically, the DC plant-humanoid has already had two movies, one helmed by Wes Craven (and a campy sequel that became a cable movie staple back in the days when no one cared about comic book movies). But SW is a fascinating character, especially during Alan Moore's career-making run of the comics back in the early '80s, when he battled monsters from hell, went to space, hung out with Constantine and wrestled with existential dread.

Hawkeye
He's the Avenger no one cares about — the dude who can just shoot arrows real good. But give the guy a chance! And no matter how silly Jeremy Renner can seem in real life (check out his weirdo app) and no matter how many franchises he fails to usurp, he's a terrific actor who may one day find the right blockbuster to helm.

Squirrel Girl
We desperately want to see more female superheroes. Plus, we also like squirrels. Hence, our inclusion of Squirrel Girl — a '90s Marvel staple whose adventures are more lighthearted than anguished. And yes, she has a giant squirrel tail and can talk to the animals.

Question
Ayn Rand isn't as cool as she was about 10 years ago, and for that we can all thank the stars. But maybe the studios can do something with comics' most Randian semihero. Created by objectivism-lover Steve Ditko in the late '60s, Question was an investigative journalist-turned-crime fighter with a blank mask who saw things in stark black and white. He was basically a psychopath, but, you know, for good. No surprise that he was the inspiration for psycho Rorschach in Alan Moore's "Watchmen."

Black Widow
Fans have been clamoring for years for a movie entirely about Scarlett Johansson's Russian-born ass-kicker — and regular movie-stealer — but so far to no avail. Maybe if MRA bros flock to "Wonder Woman" this summer, it'll actually happen. (Though the quick death of "Ghost in the Shell" has probably put a damper on ScarJo's ability to open a movie huge, despite her attempts to distract us from it.)

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4

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5

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6

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Aging In Place - Bathroom Updates

We asked our Bath Experts provide answers to a few of our most frequently asked questions about Bath Safety. A topic of concern with baby boomers.

"My husband was diagnosed with a long term illness. What safety items do you offer? We want to convert from a tub to a shower now, before his illness progresses."
- Lois, Collegeville, PA

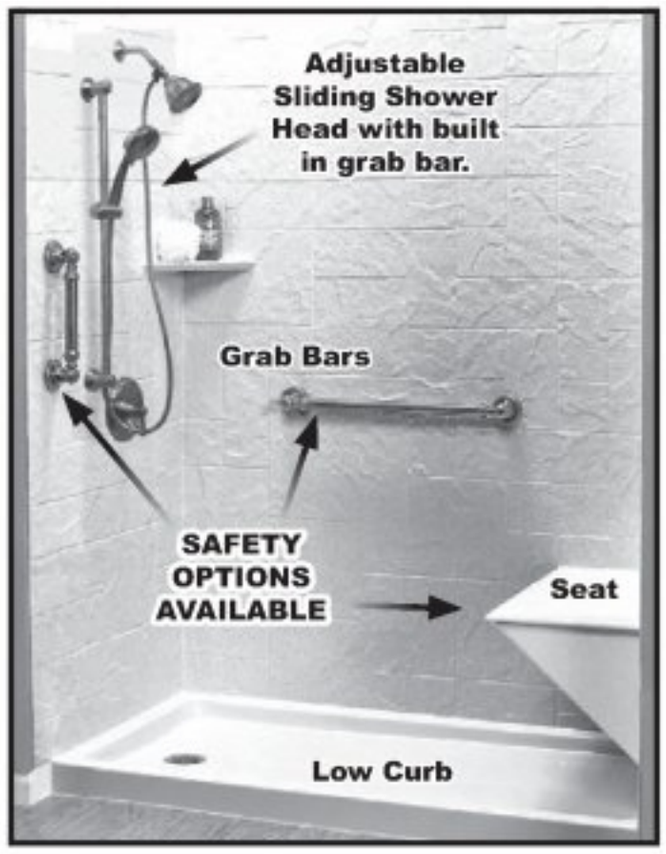
We offer showers that have a low "curb" option so if you use a wheelchair or walker, you can easily get in the shower and walk-in tubs with an in-swinging or out-swinging door. Safety grab bars, handheld adjustable and removable shower heads, non-slip textured shower floor, and shower seats are also among our safety features.

"Next Month I am having my hip replaced. Can you really redo my bathroom in just one day? I have been told it takes almost a month."
- Fred, Abington, PA

YES, we do shower and tub area conversions in one day. A traditional tile bathroom can take several days or weeks to complete. You have to deal with removing old tiles and the debris, then prep the wall for new tile, install new tile, let the adhesive dry, grout, etc. All that can take much longer that our One Day Replacement method.

"I am almost 80 and really want to stay in my home of over 30 years. What changes do you suggest I make now so I can continue to bathe safely in the future?"
- Susan & Barry, Norristown, PA

Most of us will experience mobility issues as we get older. It's good to think ahead and make changes now that will make life easier in the years to come. We can change your existing tub into an easy-access shower or walk-in tub with safety features like grab bars, a shower seat, handheld, adjustable shower head and a non-slip textured bottom.



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Author and educator Aaron Vessup with be the guest at the Erotic Literary Salon on May 16. PROVIDED

The Erotic Literary Salon celebrates 9 years

Sexologist Susana Mayer curates original erotica from all over the Philly area.

MIKE FENN
@MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

While there has no doubt been progress since the mid-20th century, it remains a fact that, even in 2017, expressing one's sexual side is still seen as a taboo topic. But all hope is not lost.

On the third Tuesday evening of each month, a crowd packs the upper level of Center City's Time Lounge. Representing all ages, walks of life and, of course, sexual experience, the members of this crowd have gathered for the Erotic Literary Salon: A Verbal Sanctuary for Sexual Expression. Over the next few hours, everyone will share personal stories (both fictitious and true), thoughts, laughs and touching moments. And on Tuesday, May 16, this one-of-a-kind safe space will mark its ninth successful year in Philadelphia.

Local sexologist Susana Mayer founded and hosts the Erotic Literary Salon. Conceived in 2008 as a way to "mainstream erotica," the salon has since developed into an all-inclusive, sex-focused event designed to draw together like-minded artists and attendees.

"The event has evolved to include the witnessing, acceptance and support of people and their pieces as they share not only their fantasies, but lusty confessions, sex memoirs, journals, diaries, correspondence and rants, using a variety of writing styles, some of which I didn't even realize existed," Mayer explains.

Each salon kicks off with an Adult Sex-Ed Salon, where audience members will anonymously pose questions and topics for Mayer and her co-host Walter to discuss. The salon itself follows, where both new and veteran attendees take the mic to share their personal works and works in progress with an appreciative and engaged audience. Fictional erotica, true tales, poetry and even stand-up comedy are all welcome at the salon. The narratives are punctuated by "six-word sex memoirs," which audience members anonymously fill out before the event to be read by Mayer.

A special guest usually makes an appearance as well, and on May 16, it will be author and educator Aaron Vessup.

If you go:

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To request a copy of the solicitation, please contact vanessa.martin@pha.phila.gov. Interested parties can also visit www.pha.phila.gov and click on Business Opportunity for more details. PHA encourages minority, woman-owned and Section 3 businesses to submit bids and participate in joint ventures.

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How to deal with seasonal allergies

wellbeing

Seasonal allergies affect 30 percent of the population. Tree pollen is a common culprit this time of year. ISTOCK

Spring has sprung! Unfortunately, that also means seasonal allergies are in full force. If you're one of the 50 million people in the U.S. suffering through it, you're not alone. We caught up with Dr. John H. Krouse, professor and director of the Temple Head and Neck Institute, for some expert insights. Here's everything you need to know about tackling seasonal allergies.

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Stay Healthy

Looking for some answers to your medical questions? We've got your back. Metro has teamed up with the experts over at Temple Health to quell your curiosity.

How common are seasonal allergies?
They are extremely common issues that affect at least 30 percent of the population. When we hit these times of year when there's a change in season, it can really trigger a reaction. For most of us, this translates to red, itchy eyes, sneezing, coughing and, in some cases, wheezing and difficulty breathing.

How do I know it's not just a cold?
Lots of people think they're just prone to getting a cold whenever the seasons change, but this is often not the case. Colds typically last anywhere from seven to 10 days and are frequently not tied to the seasons. They're also associated with colored mucus. Seasonal allergies can last for six to eight weeks and are generally accompanied with clear mucus. What's more, viral illnesses are often associated with fever, chills, muscle aches, pain and so on; seasonal allergies simply are not. That said, leaving allergies untreated can make it more likely that you'll develop a sinus infection.

Are some parts of the country worse off than others?
It's certainly geographic, but for the most part, seasonal allergies occur throughout different regions of the U.S. What triggers an allergic response will vary, though. Tree pollen is a big issue this time of year across the entire country; oak, birch and maple are all in full effect during the spring. Summer culprits, on the other hand, tend to be grasses, while fall is associated with weeds, like ragweed.

What's the first line of defense? Should I get an allergy test?
I wouldn't recommend running out and getting allergy testing right out the gate. The first step should be to try some good over-the-counter medicines. Nasal steroid sprays like fluticasone or antihistamines like fexofenadine represent simple, effective maintenance meds to keep seasonal allergies in check. If OTC medications aren't helping, then allergy tests might be useful.

What expertise does Temple Health bring to the table?
Nasal allergies overlap with things like acute and chronic sinusitis and asthma. At Temple, we look at allergies in their total context, creating individualized treatment plans that address all related conditions — not just allergies of the nose.

MARIANNE HAYES

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Is Carlos Ruiz the greatest Phillies catcher of all time? GETTY IMAGES

He signed an $8,000 contract with the Phils as a short, clunky second baseman off the Panamanian sandlots. The longest of long shots.

It took Carlos Ruiz more than eight years to make it to Philadelphia. He climbed every rung of the farm system ladder — dealing with a position change, homesickness and the language barrier. Finally, he arrived in May 2006, a 27-year-old backup catcher who hit .143 in his first 14 games.

Who could have foreseen that Ruiz would become the beloved "Chooch," a core player on the team that won five straight division titles? That he'd be "Senor Octubre," with an 1.194 OPS in two World Series? That he'd wind up one of the most beloved athletes in Philadelphia history and, arguably, the top backstop the franchise ever had?

Ruiz is now scuffling with baseball mortality, hitting .115 as a 38-year-old backup. He returns Tuesday, disguised in a Seattle Mariners uniform. For two days, at least, he'll get one more chance to bask in the adulation at Citizens Bank Park for a fan base that knew him when. Here's hoping Mariners manager Scott Servais has the decency to let Ruiz play at least once, to one more standing ovation.

For more than four decades, the Phils have largely been blessed with solid catchers. I posted a Twitter poll the other day, giving four options on who was the best, and got 1,442 votes. They broke down: Ruiz (41 percent), Darren Daulton (32), Bob Boone (22), Mike Lieberthal (5).

You could argue most Twitter followers never saw Bob Boone catch, and that there's a bias based on popularity. But I'm not sure I'd argue with the overall conclusion.

Boone was the top defender of the quartet, winning two Gold Gloves with the Phils and five after he left (he played through age 42). The flaw there is that the best pitcher of the era, Steve Carlton, refused to throw to him, employing Tim McCarver as his personal catcher for a decade. Boone was a so-so hitter, posting a Phils career slash line of .259/.325/.370.

Daulton had the top peak of this quartet, twice finishing in the top seven in MVP voting and leading the NL in RBI in 1992. He was the clubhouse leader of that Macho Row squad whom, as Lieberthal told me Sunday night, "contributed so much to the team winning even if he was hitting .200."

The issue with Daulton was always health. He only had four seasons of more than 100 games here. Ten knee surgeries stole any chance for long-term greatness.

Leiberthal? Perhaps he's got the best offensive stats of the quartet. But his 13 seasons here were largely losing years for the franchise, and he wasn't able to rise above that. One Gold Glove aside, his handling of pitchers was always spotty.

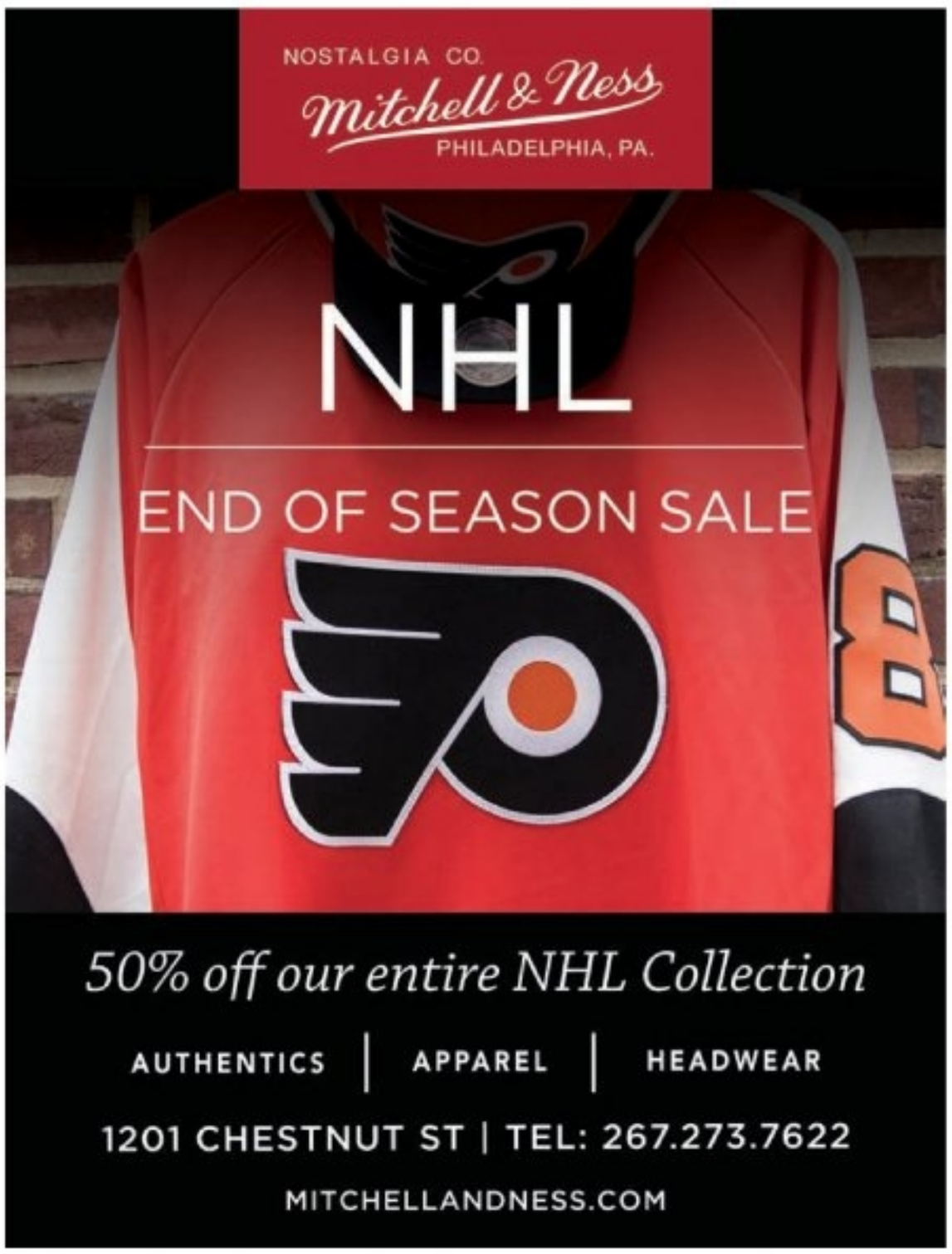
Which leaves Chooch.

Ruiz never had the power of Daulton or Lieberthal, but he hit homers when you needed them — including in both World Series. He was never a great hitter for average, but drew enough walks to put up a .352 on-base percentage. His throwing arm wasn't spectacular, but his ability to frame pitches, to save balls in the dirt, to call games and to calm a nervous pitcher was elite. Brad Lidge doesn't go 48-for-48 in saves in 2008 if Chooch isn't blocking all those short-hop sliders.

No one appreciated that more than the great Roy Halladay, who honored Ruiz by ordering a replica of his 2010 Cy Young Award made for the catcher. After tossing a no-hitter against the Reds in the NLDS that year, Halladay joked, "I called a great game. I shook off Chooch once."

Ruiz caught four no-hitters for the Phils, tying him with Jason Varitek for the major league record. They were special moments during a franchise era that boasts hundreds of special moments.

Now it all fades in the rearview mirror. We've got only the memories and, rarely, the opportunity to thank those who created them. One of those chances comes with Ruiz's return this week. Let's make the most of it.



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Phillies have allowed the most home runs in baseball, is bullpen to blame?

The Phillies used to love the long ball. Now they hate it.

EVAN MACY
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The Phillies moved into Citizens Bank Park in 2004, and from 2007-2009 the team finished the second of 30 teams in total home runs (thanks in large part to Ryan Howard, Chase Utley and Pat Burrell). In 2017, a half decade removed from contending for World Series titles the team is again high atop the MLB home run leaderboard — just the wrong one.

The Phils have allowed the most home runs in the majors with 48 (including Jayson Werth's two blasts off of Jeremy Hellickson during Sunday's tilt against the Nationals). The bullpen has surrendered 21 of these, the most of any relief unit in baseball. The starters have allowed the 10th worst total with 27.

"We're giving up too many home runs," Phillies general manager Matt Klentak told reporters recently. "I think that's true of our pitching staff in general, not just the bullpen. And that's something we expect will regress more towards normalcy at some point."

Playing in a hitters-friendly park, Philadelphia seems to live and die by the longball, and are offensively in the middle of the pack so far this season, as they were in 2016. An uptick in hitting has seen the team much more competitive — but a dreary and lackluster bullpen has cost the team several games.

A 1-8 stretch followed a six-game win streak, but surprisingly the pen has been more reliable than many would think posting a 3.07 ERA, sixth best in the majors, over the last 21 games. However, the timing of the surrendered dingers seems to be the undoing of the club.

Is the Phillies' bullpen a strength or a weakness? The jury is still out. GETTY IMAGES

Phils' GM Klentak knows that sometimes the statbook can be deceiving, and that the Phillies are still finding ways to exceed expectations despite their rebuilding growing pains.

"One of the things that's tough about pitching in the bullpen and that makes good relievers impressive is that the performance of a bullpen is emotional," Klentak said. "If a starting pitcher gives up four runs in six innings and you lose 4-3, you don't think much of it. When the starting pitcher gives up three runs and then you give up the fourth run in the ninth and lose on a walk-off, that stings more. It's the same score, same outcome, but it's emotional. And that's what's happened recently. We've had some emotional leads that we've lost late in the game. But I still have a lot of confidence in this group. I think we're still seeking roles."

The Phillies will continue to find their roles on a youthful club with a lot of potential. They'll be at home for two games this week as they host the Mariners on Tuesday and Wednesday before heading on the road to face the Nationals, Rangers and Pirates on a nine-game trek.

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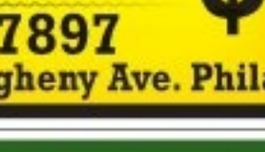

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33 RN helper
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37 Sings gaily
38 Crashing --
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44 Yellow pads
47 Formal, maybe
48 Dragon of puppetry
49 Heavyweight sport
50 Square root of IX
53 Swamp hazard
56 Temporary gifts
58 Safe caller
59 Jazzman -- Blake
60 Sergeant Bilko
61 Lisper's problem
62 Hits the hammock
63 Aquarium denizen

Down

1 Crowning point
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4 Dust collector
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6 Palace dweller
7 Shaman's quest
8 -- -- roll (lucky)
9 Not spruce
10 Ventures forth
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13 Wormed the dog
19 Holm and Fleming
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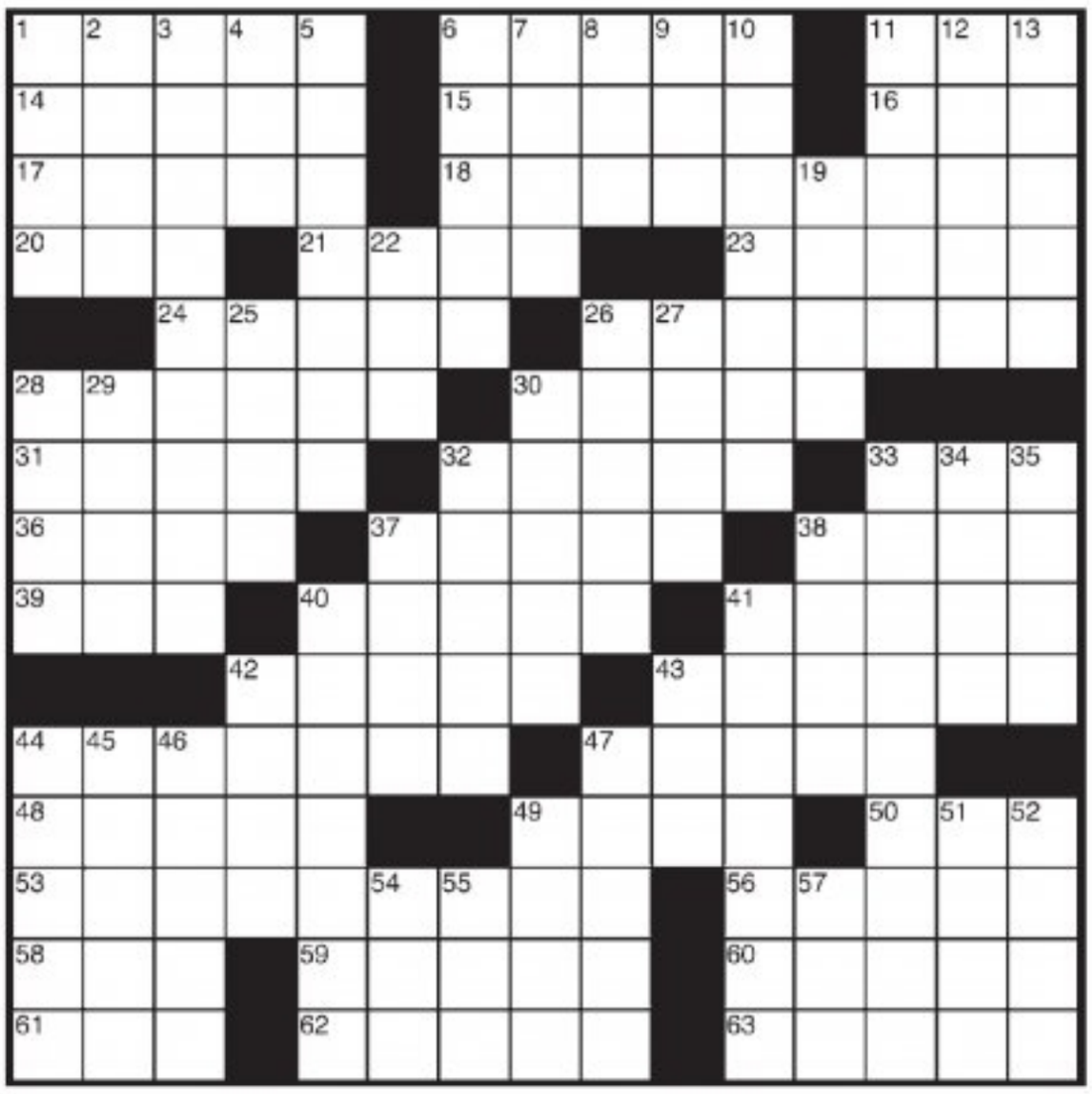

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hard

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9		8		4		7		1
7	4	1	3			9	2	
	3							

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Aries When dealing with personal relationships, don't hold back. Share your feelings and be open about what you want to see happen.

Taurus The more you do, the better you will feel about taking on bigger and better opportunities. Strive to improve things instead of just maintaining them.

Gemini Personal progress is encouraged. Don't trust what others say or do. Make physical and personal alterations that you feel are the right way to go.

Cancer Approach your responsibilities with pride. Make an appointment or lunch date with someone who can offer you a diverse way to use your skills.

Leo An unorthodox investment will grab your attention. Consider the consequences. It isn't likely to pan out well for you due to someone's misrepresentation.

Virgo Deal with partnership concerns. Don't look for an obvious solution. Try something new that will capture the attention of the person you are trying to persuade.

Libra Consider the recent circumstances that have unfolded. Having a good understanding of what has transpired will make it easier to find a workable solution.

Scorpio Taking a creative approach to life, love and the search for happiness is encouraged. Making changes that better suit your current situation should be considered.

Sagittarius Helping someone in need is a nice gesture, but don't take control. Your honest opinion and suggestions will be sufficient. Leave time to explore your interests.

Capricorn An emotional situation will leave you feeling uncertain and confused. Take a step back and go over all the details of what's transpired before you make a move.

Aquarius Don't invest in something prematurely. An emotional issue concerning a loved one will lead to an unusual request or unexpected gift or promise.

Pisces Take care of pending legal issues so that you can get on with projects you want to pursue. An agreement will encourage you to take on more responsibilities. EUGENIA LAST

Yesterday's answers

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N	E	S	S	I	E	■	C	R	E	A	M	I	N	G
■	■	■	E	L	Y	■	S	N	I	P	E	D	■	■
C	L	E	A	N	S	E	■	■	D	R	S	■	■	■
O	U	G	H	T	■	S	A	R	I	S	■	A	N	Y
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